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Senate Passes 'Bill of Rights,' 79 to 4

By JOHN CRAMER ✓

The Senate yesterday approved by an overwhelming 79 to 4 vote, its "bill of rights" for Federal employees — and sent it to the House, where further action probably will be delayed until next year.

The landmark measure, one of the most significant Government worker measures in years, is designed to call a halt to increasing agency practices which invade the privacy of their employees.

Sponsored by Sen. Sam Ervin (D., N.C.) and 54 others, the bill would, among other things:

- Prohibit coercion of employees in charity and U. S. Bond drives.
- Prohibit required employee disclosure of race or national origin.
- Sharply restrict the use of lie detectors and psychological tests.
- Restrict required disclosure of employee - and - family financial assets.
- Prohibit agencies from requiring employees to participate in outside activities not connected with their work and from "taking note" of outside activities in evaluating job performance.

• Give employees the right to legal counsel, or other representative, at any interrogation, which could lead to disciplinary action.

• Set up an independent Federal Employee Board of Rights to adjudicate employee complaints, and punish violator's of the bill's key provisions. Penalties would range from suspension to outright dismissal.

• Give employees direct access to Federal District Courts to seek injunction against threatened violations of redress of actual violations.

FBI TOO

Approved by a voice vote was an amendment making FBI subject to the bill on the same terms as CIA and National Security Agency. All three could continue to require lie detector or psychological tests of their employees — but only with individual case approval by the agency head or his designee.

Civil Service Commission Chairman John Macy went before a House Government Operations Sub - committee yesterday to urge approval of an Administration bill designed to put Federal agencies in a better position to bid for the services of shortage - category personnel, including engineers, scientists and the like.

The bill would let agencies pay the travel and subsistence expenses of such people when it invites them to pre - employment interviews.

WIDESPREAD

Mr. Macy noted that such payment is widespread in industry, and already is permitted for such Federal agencies as Atomic Energy, TVA, and VA's Department of Medicine and Surgery.

He described competition for high - qualified personnel as "severe" and certain to continue that way for the foreseeable

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...the "same recruiting aides and incentives" as industry.

But in practice, he added, Federal agencies find themselves at a "competitive disadvantage" by their inability to "invite promising candidates for a personal visit at Government expense."

He cited examples:

"An Air Force Command reported that 40 candidates stated specifically that they turned down job offers because payment of travel expenses for interview was not authorized.

"An Army installation reported that 105 engineer candidates declined appointments because they were not given the opportunity to visit the work site and meet employing officials.

"An Air Force installation found that of those college graduates who had applied for employment, but subsequently declined job offers, 75 per cent stated that the lack of opportunity to visit the installation was an important factor in their decision.

"The Department of Agriculture counted 85 instances in which candidates declined appointment because they did not have the opportunity to visit the work site and meet the employing officials."

Meantime, the Administration continues to pinch pennies on Federal employees already on the payroll.

The Government Operations Sub - committee held a second hearing yesterday — this one on a bill to increase the maximum subsistence allowance for non - VIP Federal employees traveling on Government business from \$16 to \$25 per day.

A Budget Bureau spokesman said a \$25 top is too much. He urged \$20 instead.

In practice, under present law, many agencies allow even less than the \$16 maximum. Result is that most Federal employees find it impossible to travel for the Government without losing money.

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